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RELEASED IN FULL

PAGE 01 JIDDA 08219 281628Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 PM-06 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 SY-05 SYE-00 A-02 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00
MCT-02 HA-05 SES-01 SSN-02 SPH-01 ANAE-00 /076 W
-----024124 281635Z /65

O 281546Z NOV 79
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8101
INFO /AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE 4020
USLO RIYADH IMMEDIATE
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DOHA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 8219

DEPT PASS TO A/SY/CC/TAGS

EO 12065: GDS 11/28/79 (PLACKE, JAMES A) OR-M
TAGS: PINS, ASEC, SA
SUBJ: (S) OCCUPATION OF GRAND MOSQUE: SITUATIONAS OF
1400 GMT NOV 28, 1979

REF: JIDDA 8180 DTG 271633Z NOV 79

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. SITUATION IN MECCA HAS APPARENTLY NOT CHANGED
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APPRECIABLY OVER LAST 24 HOURS, AND SMALL GROUP OF GUN-
MEN ARE STILL BELIEVED TO BE HOLDING OUT IN THE WARREN-
LIKE BASEMTN OF THE GRAND MOSQUE WITH UNKNOWN NUMBER
OF HOSTAGES. MODA OFFICIALS SAID SEVERAL TIMES NOV 28

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THAT LAST OF HOSTAGE BEGINNING TO SURRENDER, BUT NO DETAILS ARE AVAILBLE AND THIS HAS NOT YET BEEN AUTHORITATIVELY CONFIRMED BY SAG.

3. USDAO RECEIVED A REPORT THIS MORNING THAT TWELVE INDIVIDUALS (INCLUDING THREE WOMEN) WHO APPARENTLY PARTICIPATED IN SEIZURE OF GRAND MOSQUE WERE SEEN MORNING OF NOV 28 AT THE MILITARY SECTION OF JIDDA AIRPORT. THEY WERE MANACLED AND BEING ASSEMBLED FOR ONWARD TRANSPORT TO RIYADH VIA RSAF C-130. USDAO HAS ALSO LEARNED THAT THE ALLEGED LEADER OF THE GROUP (THE SELF-PROCLAIMED "MAHDI") WHO WAS WOUNDED IN THE SAUDI COUNTER-ATTACK IS NOW BEING TREATED AT KING FAYSAL HOSPITAL IN RIYADH. AS HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH SO MANY REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED OVER THE PAST WEEK, THIS INFO HAS NOT BEEN CONFIRMED.

4. SECURITY REMAINS VERY TIGHT AT IMPORTANT INSTALLATIONS IN THE KINGDOM, INCLUDING EMBASSY. RUMORS HAVE ABOUNDED OVER PAST WEEK ABOUT ALLEGED SECURITY INCIDENTS IN RIYADH, TAIF, JIDDA, AND MEDINA IN ADDITION TO MECCA, BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY SAG AND, IN GENERAL, SITUATION APPEARS VERY CALM AND ORDERLY. EASTERN PROVINCE OVER PAST FEW DAYS HAS WITNESSED INCIDENTS SOME WITH FATALITIES, BETWEEN POLICE AND SAUDI SHIITES PARTICIPATING IN BARRED PERFORMANCE OF SHIITE SELF-FLAGELLATION RITUALS CUSTOMARY DURING ISLAMIC MONTH OF MUHARRAM (SEE CHAHARAN 1881 1879 NOTAL). ADDITIONALLY, SAG HAS ACCELERATED
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REPATRIATION OF THE SEVERAL THOUSAND IRANIAN PILGRIMS WHO HAVE NOT YET RETURNED HOME TO IRAN FOLLOWING PARTICIPATION IN THE HAJJ. (REPORTED SEPTTEL).

5. SAUDI PRESS CONTINUES TO GIVE WIDE COVERAGE TO THE MECCA EVENTS. DAILY PAPERS CURRENTLY HIGHLIGHTING PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF THE SEIZURE OF THE MOSQUE ON NOV 20, IN ADDITION TO SAUDI EFFORTS TO RETAKE IT DURING THE FOLLOWING DAYS. ONE OF THE SAUDI OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE LATTER ATTEMPT GAVE ONE OF THE FULLEST REPORTS YET ON THE INCIDENT IN THE NOV 28 ISSUES OF SAUDI GAZETTE AND THE ARAB NEWS, DISCLOSING THAT AT ONE POINT THE GUNMEN WERE IN CONTROL OF A LARGE PORTION OF MECCA, INCLUDING HILLS OVERLOOKING THE MOSQUE COMPLEX (REPORTED SEPTTEL).

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6. SEVERAL PROMINENT ARAB LEADERS HAVE ALREADY VISITED RIYADH, ALLEGEDLY TO GIVE MORAL SUPPORT TO KING KHALID AND THE SAG IN THE WAKE OF THIS DISTURBING EPISODE. BAHRAIN'S AMIR, SHAYKH ISA BIN SALMAN AL KHALIFA, WAS THE FIRST TO ARRIVE NOV 26, FOLLOWED A QUARTER OF AN HOUR LATER BY KUWAIT'S RULER, SHAYKH JABIR AL-AHMAD AL-SABAH. BOTH RETURNED HOME LATER IN THE DAY. ONE NOV 27 YASIR ARAFAT, QATARI AMIR KHALIFA BIN HAMAD ATL THANI, AND UAE VICE PRESIDENT AND PREMIER SHAYKH RASHID AL MAKTUM ALSO ARRIVED IN RIYADH. JORDAN'S KING HUSAYN ARRIVED TODAY, AND OTHER AREA LEADERS ARE EXPECTED TO VISIT OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS AS WELL.
WEST

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